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ABSTRACT

As a result of the recent increase in foreign student enrollment and concomitant decrease in American student enrollment at the University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA), a study was undertaken to learn the nature of the change and how it should affect the nature of admissions policies, student services, and programs of study in the Graduate School of Education (GSE). After a review of the foreign exchange picture in the United States and around the world, the population at UCLA is profiled. It was found that the GSE foreign student population is about 8 percent of that of the entire university, which in 1979-80 was the seventh highest in the United States. The pattern of country of origin is similar to that of the United States in general. Less than half are exempted from English language course requirements. More foreign student applicants have been accepted recently (two out of three). Although some services are now provided, five recommendations are made for improvement of services: (1) a short orientation for GSE foreign students, following the general foreign student orientation and before the general GSE orientation; (2) a support network, including mentors; (3) extending invitations to foreign students to join in foreign student activities and use the services; (4) a recruitment strategy to increase the size and quality of the foreign student applicant pool; and (5) a survey of problems and needs for further action. Some data are included in tables and graphs. (MSE)

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ED213290

# THE FOREIGN STUDENT

at the

UCLA GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

Val D. Rust

## Introduction

The most significant change in the student population of the GSE during the past decade has been the increase in foreign students and the accompanying decrease in American students. To this point, however, little data has been available as to the exact nature of this change. Nor has the GSE attempted to address, in any meaningful way, how or if this change should influence the nature of its admissions policies, its student services, and its programs of study, including degree requirements, curriculum, and instructional techniques.

In August 1981, on the recommendation of Marilyn Kourilsky, Dean Goodlad organized an ad hoc committee to deal with these isssues. That committee has been rather active in the past two months. This report is intended to provide a basis for dialogue within the faculty of the GSE as to what courses of action might be taken.

The specific purpose of this report is twofold. First, we wish to provide a general picture of the foreign student population at the GSE relative to UCLA and higher education generally. Second, we wish to suggest how the GSE might better serve the foreign student. While we make some reference to academic policy issues, they are not central to our report, mainly because we feel much more general dialogue must be engaged in before the GSE attempts to establish broad admissions, curricular, and degree policy relative to the foreign student.

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The Big Picture

In a recent report of the American Council on Education (1981), the following observation was made:

> The United States is not alone in feeling the effects of rapid increases in foreign student populations. In 1960, the total number of foreign students in the world was around a quarter of a million. That number has grown to a million or more. While the United States has more foreign students than any other nation, the majority of the world's foreign students are in other countries. In fact, the U.S. share of the global foreign student population has decreased in recent years: the increase in foreign student numbers has been felt proportionately even more in certain countries abroad.

We can see that the rapid expansion of foreign students is affecting most of the developed world. There are now approximately one million foreign students in the world today, and almost 80% of them come from the developing world. THe ACE report gives the following figures:

| Country | Number of Students |
|---|---|
| Canada | 40,000 |
| France | 100,000 |
| Great Britain | 60,000 |
| Soviet Union | 80,000 |
| USA | 300,000 |
| West Germany | 50,000 |

One of the distinctive features of the United States is its failure to establish some form of national policy regarding foreign students. Almost every other country has strict regulations. For example, France requires nonfrancophone students to pass a French language examination in the home country, produce evidence of sufficient maintenance funds, and proof of pre-registration before a visa is issued. West Germany reserves six percent of all open places in every field of study at all

universities for foreign students. These students are not allowed to take regular university courses until they pass a language examination. The Soviet Union works diligently, through its foreign embassies, to identify worthy students and gives them generous state scholarships if they are not funded by their own governments. In the United States, there is no central policy, and most universitites have failed to fill the policy void with regard to their institutions.

The Number of Foreign Students in the USA

In the past 25 years the number of foreign students in the United States has risen dramatically. In Table I we see that there are eight times as many foreign students today as in 1954/55. The number of foreign students has almost doubled in the last five years. A similar rate of increase can be seen in the field of education in the last quarter of a century, although the relative increase in the past five years has been much smaller (approximately 20%). In 1979/80, 4.3% of all foreign students in the United States were studying education.

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Insert Table I about here

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The study of education has fluctuated between a low of 4.3% and a high of 5.8% of all foreign students during the past quarter of a century. From Table II we see that the percentage of foreign students in education is relatively small compared with the professional fields of engineering (26.9% in 1979/80) as well as business and management (16.4% in 1979/80). We must understand, however, that these figures include two year, four year, and graduate students. Only 32.9% of all foreign students in the United States are in graduate programs.

In 1979/80 UCLA ranked seventh in the United States in terms of the number of foreign students on campus. One year earlier it was not in the top ten, but it experienced a sharp increase of 26% in that year alone to 1941 foreign students. Approximately 60% of these students are in the professional schools. The largest enrollments are in Engineering and Computer Science, followed by Management, Architecture and Urban Planning, and Education (La Belle, Table 3). The GSE enrolls about 8% of the total foreign student population at UCLA.

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Insert Figure I about here

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Country of Origin

The country of origin of foreign students is also important to note. In Figure II we see that the increase of Asian students is dramatic. While Asia has always been well represented (42% of all foreign students in 1954/55), the percentage of foreign students from Asia has increased until it is now approximately 59%. The Middle East alone accounts for about 30% of all foreign students in the USA.

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Insert Figure II about here

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If we look at specific countries, we find that a small percentage of countries account for a relatively large percentage of the students. In Table II we see that approximately 66% of all foreign students come from just 20 countries; of these, Nigeria, Taiwan, Japan, Hong Kong, India, Iran, Saudi Arabia, and Canada account for 49%. Nigeria sends as many students as the rest of Africa combined. Iran accounts for more

than the rest of the Middle East combined. In fact, there are more Iranians than Europeans and North Americans combined.

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Insert Table II about here

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The country of origin for students in the GSE follows the general American pattern. In Table II we have listed the incoming graduate students for the fall 1981 by country of origin. We see that Taiwan is heavily represented. Also, the number of Iranian students has fallen sharply.

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Insert Table III about here

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English Language Proficiency

One of the most vexing problems for the GSE in recent years has been the inability of foreign students to cope adequately with written and spoken English. All new UCLA graduate students who are not from English speaking countries are required to demonstrate minimum English competence. If they do not meet the standard, they are required to take from one to three courses in English as a Second Language.

At UCLA from 1975 through 1979, 1250 students took the English Placement Examination (La Belle, p. 3). As a result of this examination, the following requirements were levied:

| | |
|---|---|
| Exempted | 42% |
| One quarter of English | 36% |
| Two quarters of English | 15% |
| Three quarters of English | 5% |

Most students take the examination after they have been admitted to the university and just before they register for courses. This means that they are taking courses in the GSE concurrently with their English courses. A number of policy and advisement possibilities could be considered, but we need more information before courses of action are charted.

GSE Enrollments

Because the record keeping apparatus at the GSE is not yet geared to give ready information about foreign students, we are working under some handicap in this report. We must make clear that the following data do not include all of the students in the GSE. Data for teacher education and TEL-sponsored degree programs have not yet been collected. Because the TEL is responsible for about 200 students, the general percentages presented below would be greatly affected. Our intention in this report is to provide information about foreign student enrollments in the specialization-sponsored master's and doctoral degree programs.

From Table III we find that the ratio of foreign students to American students who have been admitted to the GSE has shifted. How do we explain this? First, the number of foreign applications has increased, and therefore we would expect more foreign students to be admitted. Second, whereas in 1974 a foreign student had a 40% chance of receiving an offer, a student in 1978 had a 50% chance of receiving an offer. That shifted further to 65% in 1981. In other words, two out of every

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Insert Table III about here

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three applications were accepted in 1981. Third, the number of American applications has been cut almost in half during this time.

We do not make any judgment at this point in time about the trend, but are concerned that recruitment endeavors penetrate beyond the confines of American educational institutions, so that we can have confidence that foreign candidates are the best a foreign country has to offer. Because students come from selected countries, it should be possible to develop a focused as well as a general international recruitment strategy.

In Table IV we give a breakdown of the applications, offers, and acceptances within the various specializations during the past decade. Because of changes in the specializations, it has been necessary to collapse some of the data. We note that foreign student admissions are concentrated in certain specializations. In our judgment, such a finding is appropriate. It is crucial, however, that the decision by a specialization to admit several foreign students be made with programmatic implications in mind. In our opinion, schoolwide admissions considerations are also imperative, because we require all students to take several courses outside their narrow specializations.

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Insert Table IV about here

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## STUDENT SERVICES FOR THE FOREIGNER

Nationwide a number of special institutes and centers have sprung up to assist students and institutions of higher learning deal with foreign students. For example, the Institute of International

Education works closely with foreign countries to find placements for students.

At UCLA two centers exist which are of major importance for foreign students. These are the Office of International Students and Scholars (OISS) and the International Student Center (ISC). OISS handles a number of programs designed to assist the foreign student, and we list the important programs below:

I. American Language and Orientation Programs

A. Two-Week Program: This is designed to provide pre-academic preparation for study at UCLA. Board and room are provided and the students are introduced to academic studies as well as general cultural conditions.

B. Six-Week Program: This covers the same activities as the two-week program but it includes an intensive language component.

II. Pre-Academic Seminars

Two three-day seminars are conducted in September, free of charge, designed to introduce the student to UCLA and living in America. The orientation includes: academic advisor process, immigration regulations, local permanent housing, work permission, financial aid, taxes, banking, health clearance, American education in general.

III. Counseling of Foreign Students

IV. Workshops on issues important to the foreign student

V. Special Programs

A. The Home Hospitality program

B. International Pen Friends

C. Nationality groups

The International Student Center is a well-equiped, comfortable building which is supported by private interests. It provides such activities as conversational language classes, lectures on current events, folk dancing, and sightseeing programs.

The most important early service it provides to foreign students is temporary free housing. Upon arrival, students are given 2-3 days in the home of a local family or student, while ISC staff work with the student in locating permanent nonuniversity housing.

It is our assessment that the OISS and ISC are very thorough in their orientation efforts. The major task of the GSE should be to provide pre-academic and initial orientation to the GSE itself. At this point in time very little is done. Informal feedback from foreign students leads us to the conclusion that they are not well served by the GSE. Further, only about one-third of all new students participate in the OISS-sponsored orientation programs. The GSE must take some initiative to get them involved in those activities in greater numbers. The following recommendations seem in order at this point in time:

1. A one or two-day orientation program for incoming foreign students, in September between the time of the OISS orientation program and general GSE orientation, should be organized. This orientation would focus on the GSE activities.
2. The GSE should facilitate the development of a foreign student support network in the GSE, including the recruitment of "student mentors," who would volunteer to spend time with new students.
3. The GSE should contact every newly admitted foreign student and inform him or her of the existence of the general UCLA orientation programs for foreign students and advise them to participate in them. They would also be notified of the existence of the Mentor program and invited to participate.

4. The GSE must work toward the formulation of a recruitment strategy for foreign students. This strategy would not be designed to increase the number of students, but it would be designed to increase the size and quality of the applicant pool.

5. A survey of foreign student problems and needs should be conducted to determine what further courses of action may be necessary.

The above recommendations seem to be modest, but important first steps in our work. The GSE must be willing to provide financial and personnel support to accomplish the above tasks.

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Table I

Number of Foreign Students in the United States

| | Total | Education | % of Total |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1954/55 | 34,000 | 1,500 | 4.3 |
| 1959/60 | 48,000 | 2,500 | 5.1 |
| 1964/65 | 82,000 | 4,000 | 4.9 |
| 1969/70 | 135,000 | 7,800 | 5.8 |
| 1974/75 | 154,600 | 9,800 | 5.5 |
| 1979/80 | 286,000 | 12,300 | 4.3 |

Source: Open Doors, p. 9.

Table II
Nationality and World Area of Foreign Students
in the USA, 1979/80 and the number
of foreign students admitted to the Graduate
School of Education by country

| | % | % | New GSE Students |
|---|---|---|---|
| Africa | | 12.6 | |
| Nigeria | 5.7 | | 1 |
| Libra | 1.1 | | |
| Others | 5.8 | 2 | |
| Asia (East, South Central, South East) | | | 28.5 |
| Taiwan | 6.1 | 7 | |
| Japan | 4.3 | 3 | |
| Hong Kong | 3.5 | | |
| Korea (South) | 1.7 | | |
| India | 3.1 | | |
| Thailand | 2.3 | 2 | |
| Vietnam | 1.8 | | |
| Malaysia | 1.3 | 3 | |
| Others | 4.3 | 3 | |
| Asia (Middle East) | | 29.5 | |
| Iran | 17.9 | 1 | |
| Saudi Arabis | 3.3 | 2 | |
| Lebanon | 2.1 | 1 | |
| Jordan | 1.6 | | |
| Others | 4.6 | 2 | |
| Europe | 7.9 | | |
| United Kingdom | 1.5 | | |
| Others | 6.4 | 1 | |
| North America | | 5.4 | |
| Canada | 5.2 | 3 | |
| Others | .2 | | |
| Oceania | 1.4 | | |
| Central America | | 3.9 | |
| Mexico | 2.0 | 3 | |
| Others | 1.9 | | |
| Latin America | | 8.0 | |
| Venezuela | 3.4 | 3 | |
| Colombia | 1.1 | | |
| Brazil | 1.0 | | |
| Others | 2.3 | 2 | |

Table III

| | Number of Applications | | | Offers by GSE | | | Acceptances by Students | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Total | Foreign | % Foreign | Total | Foreign | % Foreign | Total | Foreign | % Foreign |
| 1974 | 663 | 56 | 8.4 | 291 | 24 | 8.2 | 245 | 18 | 7. ? |
| 1978 | 346 | 76 | 21.9 | 180 | 38 | 21.1 | 143 | 19 | 20. ? |
| 1981 | 305 | 85 | 27.9 | 216 | 56 | 25.9 | | | |

Source: Graduate School of Education, UCLA

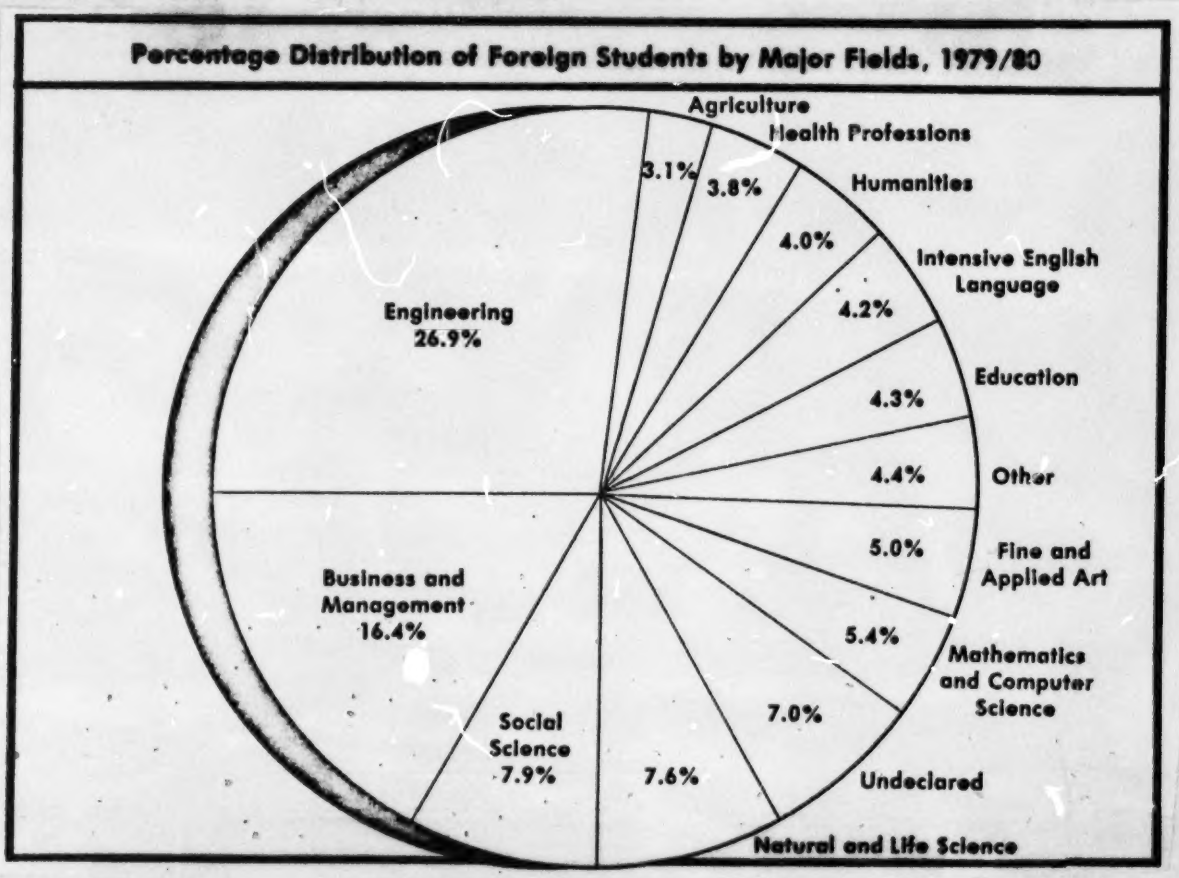
Table IV
the number of applications, offers, and acceptances at the Graduate School of Education in 1974, 1978, and 1981 by specialization.

| | 1974 | | | 1978 | | | 1981 | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| (UCLA) | Applications | Offers | Acceptances | Applications 12519 (2902) 23% | Offers 5602 (921) 17.7% | Acceptances 2540 (356) 14% | Applications | Offers | Acceptances |
| Comp & Int Ed | 13 (3) | 8 (2) | 7 (1) | 14 (6) | 8 (3) | 7 (3) | 16 (6) | 12 (6) | |
| Phil | 24 (4) | 17 (2) | 15 (2) | 12 (4) | 8 (4) | 7 (2) | 4 (0) | 4 (0) | |
| Soc Sciences | 19 (5) | 13 (3) | 12 (2) | 10 (2) | 5 (2) | 3 (1) | 11 (7) | 7 (4) | |
| Counseling | 138 (8) | 59 (5) | 50 (5) | 37 (7) | 19 (5) | 15 (5) | 59 (9) | 40 (7) | |
| Early Childhood | 64 (9) | 24 (2) | 17 (1) | 38 (9) | 7 (0) | 5 (0) | 30 (13) | 9 (2) | |
| Learning & Instruc | 61 (4) | 37 (2) | 29 (1) | 33 (7) | 11 (1) | 8 (1) | 24 (8) | 16 (6) | |
| RME | 19 (2) | 13 (1) | 10 (0) | 22 (6) | 15 (3) | 14 (2) | 15 (7) | 13 (5) | |
| Spec Ed | 92 (5) | 18 (1) | 16 (1) | 25 (4) | 9 (0) | 7 (0) | 22 (4) | 13 (1) | |
| Vocational Specs | 31 (2) | 16 (1) | 16 (1) | 18 (2) | 10 (2) | 9 (2) | 7 (2) | 4 (2) | |
| Administration Specs | 75 (5) | 20 (1) | 17 (1) | 43 (9) | 29 (6) | 21 (5) | 39 (9) | 31 (8) | |
| Curric & Schooling | 47 (3) | 26 (1) | 24 (1) | 49 (15) | 35 (11) | 24 (7) | 39 (12) | 31 (11) | |
| Higher Ed | 80 (6) | 40 (3) | 32 (2) | 45 (5) | 24 (1) | 23 (1) | 39 (8) | 23 (4) | |

Source: Graduate School of Education, UCLA
( ) = foreign graduate students

Figure I

Percentage Distribution of Foreign Students by Major Fields, 1979/80

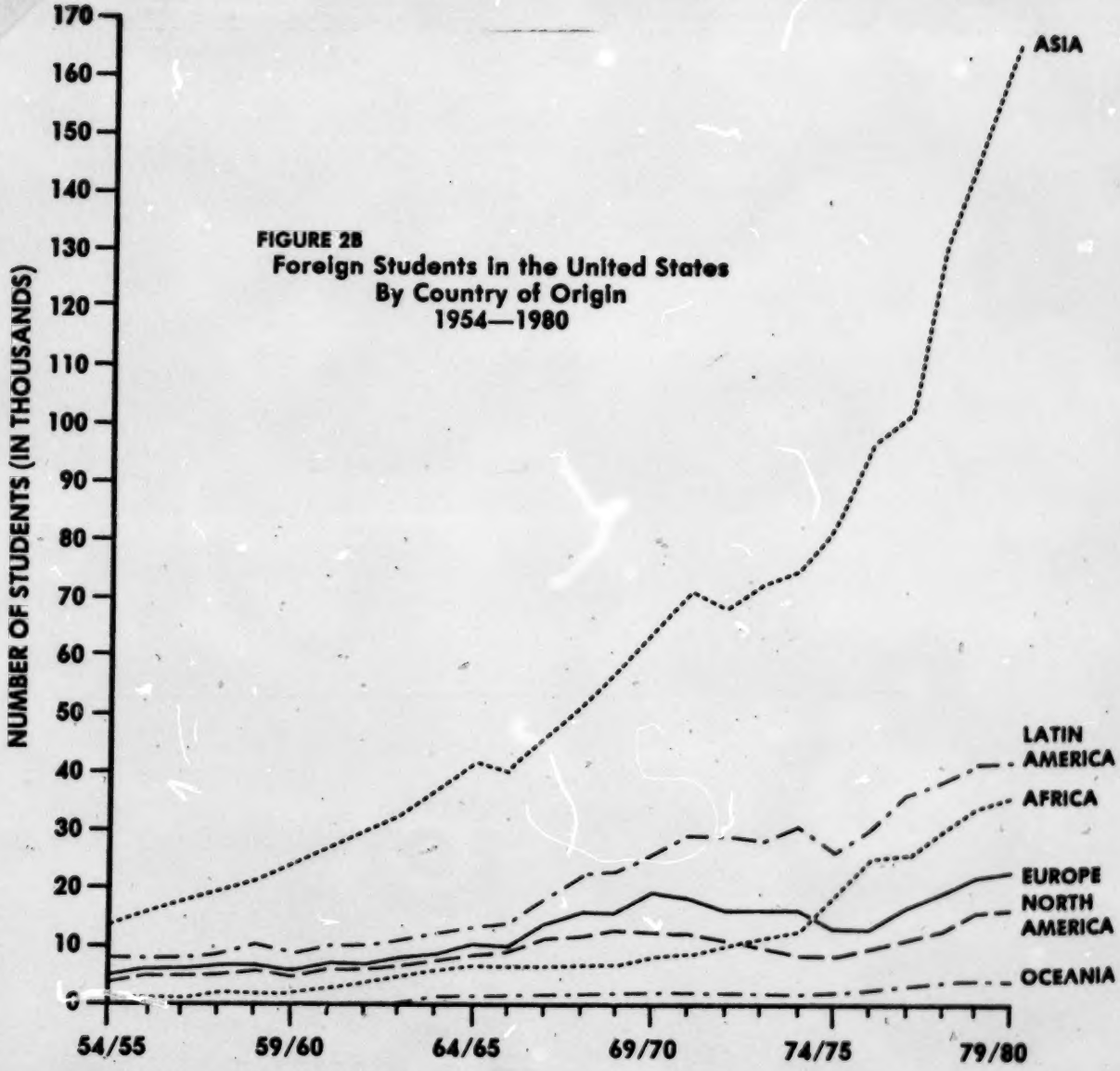



Source: Open Doors, p. 13.

Figure II

Foreign Students in the United States

by Country of Origin, 1954-1980




Source: Open Doors, p. 5